



Bid'ah

**According to the
Four Madhhabs**

by
Dr. Sadi Kose

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Hanbali Madhhab	6
Al-Ba'li	6
Al-Karmy	6
Shafii Madhhab	7
Al-Imam Al-Shaafii	7
Al-Nawawi	7
Maaliki Madhhab	10
Al-Zarqaani	10
Al-Wansharisy	10
Hanafi Madhhab	11
Al-Ayni	11
Ibn Abideen	11
Al-Laknawi	12
<i>Meaning of the Hadith "Every innovation is misguidance"</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>In Depth Analysis of Bid'ah</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Reactions of the Companions to Newly Introduced Practices</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Proofs For What was Introduced by the Companions is not a Blameworthy Innovation (bid'ah dalalah)</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Should one adapt the practice of a Companion or go back to what was done at the time of the Prophet (pbuh)?</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Innovations of the Followers and Successors</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Innovations Introduced after the Era of the Companions, Followers and Successors</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>34</i>

Introduction

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful
The concept of bid'ah has become a means by which the Muslim nation has become divided. There are some who call anything, which did not exist during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), bid'ah and label those who adopt some of those practices as people of innovation (*bid'ah*) or misguidance (*dalaalah*).

The question that must be asked is: "How have the Muslims been dealing with newly introduced matters starting from the time of the Companions until recent times?" In order to provide an encompassing answer to this question, I gathered the views of the four schools of thought in this booklet (Hanbali, Shafii, Maliki and Hanafi madhhabs). From each Madhab, I include statements of some of the famous scholars regarding the meaning and classification of bid'ah (innovation).

Henceforth, I include the magnificent research concerning bid'ah of one of the greatest scholars of 19th century: Al-Imaam Abu Al-Hasaanat Muhammed Abdulhayy Al-Laknawi Al-Hindi. In his research he demonstrated how the first three blessed generations responded to the newly innovated matters which cropped up during their time. He concludes his research by providing advice on how we should deal with bid'ah in our own time. I believe his advice contains therein a cure for the disease of corrupting the term bid'ah, perhaps inadvertently, to divide the Muslim community.

May Allah make this little effort a means by which the truth

can be understood. Ameen!

All praise is due to Allah and may His peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammed, upon his Family, his Companions and upon those who follow in their footsteps until the day of judgment. Ameen!

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Hanbali Madhhab

Al-Ba'li

Al-Shaykh Shamsuddeen Muhammed bin Abi Al-Fath Al-Ba'li Al-Hanbali says in his *Al-Muttali' Ala Abwaab Al-Muqni'*(334):

"Bid'ah is a practice that did not exist before. It is divided into two broad categories: praiseworthy (*bid'atu huda*) and blameworthy (*bid'atu dalaala*). Bid'ah can fall under one of the five rulings found in the Islamic law (i.e., obligatory, recommended, permissible, disliked or forbidden)."

Al-Karmy

Al-Shaykh Al-Allama Mariy bin Yusuf Al-Karmi Al-Hanbali said in his *Tahqeeq Al-Burhaan Fi Shurb Al-Dukhaan*¹ that Ibn Abdusselaam, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said:

"Innovations can be obligatory (*wajiba*), forbidden (*muharrama*), recommended (*mandooba*), disliked (*makrooha*) or permissible (*mubaaha*). In order to know in which category an innovation falls, one has to subject it to the principles of Islamic law (*al-qawaa'ed al-share'yya*). If a given innovation falls under obligatory principles or rules, it is taken as obligatory (*wajiba*) or if it falls under forbidden rules, it is considered forbidden (*muharrama*) etc."

¹ Extract from pages 145-147.

Shafii Madhhab

Al-Imam Al-Shaafi

Al-Imam Al-Nawawi says in his *Tahdheeb Al-Asmaa wa Al-Sifaat* (3/23):

Al-Bayhaqi narrates with its chain of transmitters in his *Manaaqib Al-Shaafi* that Al-Shafii said: "The newly innovated matters are of two kinds. That which goes against the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (pbuh) or his tradition or the consensus (*ijmaa'*) of the Muslim nation (*ummah*), is called the misguided innovation (*al-bid'a al-dalaala*). The second kind is an innovation that is praiseworthy about which there is no disapproval from any of the scholars and this is not a blameworthy innovation. Omar (ra) said regarding the *Taraweeh* prayer (*qiyaamo shahri ramadaan*) that it is an awesome innovation (*ni'mat al-bid'atu haadihi*) meaning it did not exist during the era of the Prophet (pbuh) but it does not contradict anything that did exist."

Al-Nawawi

Al-Imam Al-Nawawi says in his *Tahdheeb Al-Asmaa wa Al-Sifaat* (3/22):

Bid'ah (pl. *bida'*): Novelties or innovations that did not exist at the time of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Innovations are categorized as either praiseworthy (*hasana*) or blameworthy (*qabeeha*). Shaykh Al-Islam Abu Muhammed Abdul Azeez bin Abdusselam (may Allah have mercy on him and be pleased with him) says at the end of his *Kitaab Al-Qawaaid*:

"Innovations can be obligatory (*wajiba*), forbidden

(*muharrama*), recommended (*mandooba*), disliked (*makrooha*) or permissible (*mubaaha*). In order to know in which category an innovation falls, one has to subject it to the principles of Islamic law (*al-qa-waa'ed al-share'yya*). If a given innovation falls under obligatory principles or rules, it is taken as obligatory (*wajiba*) or if it falls under forbidden rules, it is considered forbidden (*muharrama*) etc.

Examples for [communal] **obligatory** innovations include:

1. Specializing in Arabic Grammar, which is the means by which the Book of Allah and the traditions of His Messenger (pbuh) can be understood. Preservation of Islam, which is obligatory upon Muslims, depends on the [correct] understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah and since one cannot understand them without Arabic Grammar, the latter becomes obligatory. One of the rules of jurisprudence is: "That which is needed to fulfill an obligation becomes obligation itself."
2. Preserving the meaning of the rare words used in the Qur'an and Sunnah.
3. Recording and preserving the principles of the Islamic creed and jurisprudence (*usool al-deen wa usool al-fiqh*).
4. Specialization in the science of criticism and authentication of the narrators (*ilm al-jarh wa al-ta'deel*) as well as sorting out narrations by which authentic ones are separated from the fabrications.

An example for a **forbidden** innovation is:

- The way of the deviant sects such as Al-Qadariyya, Al-Jabriyya, Al-Murjia and Al-Mujassima (*anthromorphists*). Refuting the ideas of these deviant sects is an example for an innovation that is obligatory.

Examples for **recommended** innovations include:

1. Schools or any other praiseworthy practice (*ihsaan*) that did not exist during the first century (*al-asr al-awwal*).
2. *Taraawih* prayer.
3. Specializing in the delicate or minute matters of Sufism (*tasaawuf*).

Examples for **disliked** innovations include:

1. Decoration of the Mosques.
2. Adornment of the copies of Qur'an.

Examples for **permissible** innovations include:

1. Handshake after *Fjar* and *Asr* prayers.
2. Eating delicious foods, wearing good clothing, residing in lofty houses, wearing pallium with sleeves though some scholars may classify the latter among the disliked innovations others may include it among the practiced sunnas of the era of the Prophet (pbuh) and the decades that followed it."

Maaliki Madhhab

Al-Zarqaani

Al-Imam Muhammed Al-Zarqaani Al-Maaliki said in his commentary of *Al-Muwatta* (1/238):

"Linguistically speaking, bid'ah is a novelty that did not exist before. In the context of religion, it is the antonym of Sunna. That is to say, anything that did not exist at the time of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). It is divided in to five categories (i.e., obligatory, recommended, permissible, disliked and forbidden)."

Al-Wansharisy

Al-Shaykh Ahmad bin Yahya Al-Wansharisy mentions in his *Al-Mi'iyaa*r that the bid'ah is divided into the aforementioned five categories. He says:

"The truth of the matter about bid'ah is that it is to be dealt with on a case by case basis. Every bid'ah is to be subjected to the Islamic principles to find out under which of the five categories it falls."

Hanafi Madhhab

Al-Ayni

Al-Imam Badruddeen Al-Ayni says in his commentary on Saheeh al-Bukhari called *Umdat Al-Qaari* (11/120):

"Bid'ah is a newly innovated matter that did not exist at the time of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). It is of two types. If it falls in a category that is considered good according to Islam, it is called a praiseworthy innovation (*bid'ah hasana*). If, on the other hand, it falls in a category that is appalled by Islam, it is called blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah mustaqbaha*)."

Ibn Abideen

Al-Imam Ibn Abideen says in his *Radd Al-Mukhtaar* (1/375):

Bid'ah could be **obligatory** (*wajiba*). Examples of this include:

1. Gathering the evidences (or arguments) to respond to the misguided sects.
2. Learning Arabic grammar in order to understand the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Bid'ah could be **recommended** (*mandooba*). Examples of this include:

1. Building schools
2. Any praiseworthy practice (*ihsaan*) that did not exist during the first century (*al-asr al-awwal*).

Bid'ah could be **disliked** (*makrooha*). Examples of this include:

- Adornment of the Mosques.

Bid'ah could be **permissible** (*mubaaha*). Examples of this include:

- Eating delicious foods and wearing good clothing.

***Al-Laknawi*²**

What is introduced by the Companions, Followers (*tabeen*) and Successors (*taba' al-tabeen*) or what was done during their time but they were not opposed to it is not a blameworthy innovation (bid'ah) that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) warned us about.

Al-Muhaqqiq Sa'd Al-Deen Al-Taftazaani says in his *Al-Ilahiyyaat (Sharh Al-Maqaasid)*³:

"The experts among the *Maturidis* and *Ash'aaris* do not label each other 'innovators' or 'misguided' unlike the partisan bigots who call others 'innovators' or 'misguided' due to differences even in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) - such as giving the fatwas:

- For the permissibility of leaving out *basmala* in prayer on purpose
- That any bodily fluid leaving the body other than the two ways of call of nature won't nullify wudu
- That it is permissible to perform marriage without a guardian (*waly*)
- For praying behind an imam without reading *Fatiha*

² Taken from the book of Al-Allama Al-Faqeeh Al-Muhaddith Bahr Al-Uloom Abu Al-Mahaasin Muhammed Abdulhayy Al-Laknaawi called "*Iqaamat Al-Hujja Ala Anna Al-Ikthaara Min Al-Ta'abbudi Laysa Bi Bid'ah* (Providing Proofs That Extra Worship is not a Blameworthy Innovation)" (Pages 16-58)

³ 2/271

These people do not know that blameworthy innovations (*bid'ah madhmooma*) are a novelty in religion that did not exist at the time of the Companions or the Followers (*tabeen*) and there is no evidence for them [one way or another] in Islamic law. Among the ignoramus are those who lump everything, that did not exist at the time of the Companions, under blameworthy innovation even if there is no evidence in the Islamic law that it is blameworthy. They misuse the saying of the Prophet (pbuh), "...beware of the newly innovated matters...⁴", without realizing that what is meant by this hadith is 'bid'ah used to introduce something foreign to the religion [and its principles]'.

It says in *Majaalis al-Abraar*.

"Bid'ah has two meanings. One pertains to its linguistics which encompasses any newly innovated matter be it in the area of worship (*'ibaadaat*) or customs (*'aadaat*). The second meaning pertains to the Islamic law and in this context it means any addition or subtraction from the religion after the companions without the permission of the Prophet (pbuh) either implicitly (*ishaaratan*), explicitly (*sareehaatan*), verbally (*qawlan*) or by way of practice (*fi'lan*)."

It says also in *Majaalis al-Abraar*.

"Don't be fooled by the consensus of the people upon a newly introduced practice after the companions. You

⁴ This is part of the hadith of Al-Irbaad bin Saariya al-Sulamy that is narrated by Ahmad (4/126&127, Abu Dawood (4/201), Al-Tirmidhy (10/143) who said "It is a fair authentic hadith (*hadeethun hasanun saheeh*), Ibn Maja (1/15) and it is the 28th hadith of Al-Imam Al-Nawawi's 40 Hadith collection.

must be diligent in figuring out if it is part of the understanding or practices of the Companions. The most knowledgeable among the people and closest to Allah among the later generations are those most similar to the Companions and most knowledgeable about their way. Verily the religion of Islam is taken from them and they are the means by which the knowledge of religion is passed on from the Prophet (pbuh) himself."

It says in *Shirat Al-Islam*:

What is meant by Sunna is that which one must adhere to which was practiced by the blessed, righteous and rightly guided generations. These are the four rightly guided Caliphs and the contemporaries of the Prophet (pbuh), those that came after them (*tabeen*) and those that followed them (*taba' al-tabeen*). Whatever is innovated after these three blessed generation which contradicts their practices is a [blameworthy] innovation and every [blameworthy] innovation is misguidance. The Companions used to oppose the practices that they did not see during the time of the Prophet (pbuh)."

Yaqoob bin Sayyid Ali Al-Roomi said in his *Mafaatih Al-Jinaan Sharh Shirat al-Islam*:

What is meant by [blameworthy] innovation is that which goes against the practices [and understanding] of the three blessed generations of the Companions, Followers and Successors. Otherwise, they declared that among the innovated matters are the accepted praiseworthy ones such as specializing in the Islamic sciences and writing books about them. On the other hand, there are

the rejected blameworthy innovations, which go against the way of the three blessed generations such that if they came to know about the said innovation they would have rejected it.

Meaning of the Hadith "Every innovation is misguidance"

It says in *Al-Tareeqa Al-Muhammadiyah* of Muhammed Afendy Al-Birkilily Al-Roomi:

If it is said: How can one reconcile between the saying of the Messenger (pbuh)

"Every innovation is misguidance."

and the sayings of the jurists (*fuqahaa'*)

"Innovation can be permissible (*mubaah*) such as the use of sieve and eating wheat until one is full. It could be recommended (*mustahabba*) such as building schools, minarets and publishing books. It could also be obligatory (*waajib*) such as gathering the evidence and arguments to respond to the doubts spread by the apostates and the like."?

I would say:

Bid'a has a linguistic general meaning (*ma'na lughawy*) and specialized definition in Islam (*ma'na shar'iy*).

As for the linguistic meaning, it refers to anything peculiar be it in worship or customs. This is because the word bid'ah come from the root word 'to originate' or 'to innovate'. The is the meaning sense of the word when used by jurists (*fuqahaa'*) and what they mean

in absolute terms is anything that is invented after the blessed generations.

As for the Islamic definition of the term bid'ah, it refers to any additions or subtractions from Islam after the era of the Companions without the permission of the Prophet (pbuh) either implicitly (*ishaaratan*), explicitly (*sareehaatan*), verbally (*qawlan*) or by way of practice (*fi'lan*). This definition does not apply to customs. Rather it refers to some of the issues of creed (*aqeeda*) and some forms of worship and this was the meaning that the Prophet (pbuh) intended [when he said that every innovation is misguidance]. The proofs for this are the following statements of the Prophet (pbuh):

- "You must adhere to my sunnah and the sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs [after me].⁵"
- "You have better knowledge in the affairs of the world."⁶
- "If anyone introduces in our matter (religion) something, which does not belong to it, will be rejected."⁷

It says in *Al-Hadeeqa Al-Nadiyya Sharh Al-Tareeqa Al-Muhammadiyya* of Khoja Zada:

"As for the statement of " ...any additions or subtractions from Islam after the era of the Companions..." the author of *Al-Tariiqah Al-Muhammadiyya* I would say that what-

5 See the previous footnote.

6 Narrated by Muslim (15/118) from Aihsa (ra) and Anas (ra).

7 Narrated by Bukhari (5/122) and Muslim (12/16) from Aisha (ra).

ever is innovated or introduced during the time of the rightly guided Caliphs, is not considered 'blameworthy innovations' due to the saying of Prophet (pbuh) "You must adhere to my sunnah and the sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs [after me].⁸"

It says in *Hawaashi Al-Tareeqa Al-Muhammadiyah* of Abdulghani Al-Nablusi:

"As for the statement of " ...after the blessed generations..." the author of *Al-Tareeqa Al-Muhammadiyah*, I would say that the term "blessed generations" refers to the contemporaries of the Prophet (pbuh) and of his Companions. The proof is the saying of the Prophet (pbuh), "You must adhere to my sunnah and the sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs [after me].⁹". Thus what was introduced (*ma hadatha*) during the time of the companions is not a blameworthy innovation. The blameworthy innovation is what was introduced after the time of the Companions, Followers and Successors."

These are the statements of the scholars declaring unanimously that whatever was introduced during the era of the Companions, Followers or Successors, without any objection [from the learned of the time] is not included in the blameworthy innovation and its practice is not considered misguidance.

8 This is part of the hadith of Al-Irbaad bin Saariya al-Sulamy that is narrated by Ahmad (4/126&127, Abu Dawood (4/201), Al-Tirmidhy (10/143) who said "It is a fair authentic hadith (*ha-deethun hasanun saheeh*), Ibn Maja (1/15) and it is the 28th hadith of Imam Al-Nawawi's 40 Hadith collection.

9 See the previous footnote.

In Depth Analysis of Bid'ah

Whatever was done during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), by him personally or by the Companions with his approval, is not bid'ah according to the consensus (of scholars).

Whatever did not exist during the era of the Prophet (pbuh) and was introduced later is termed bid'ah in the general absolute linguistic sense of the term. The latter can either be in the customs or in the area of worship.

If a newly innovated matter is in the area of customs ('aadaat), it does not fall under blameworthy innovation unless there is an evidence indicating otherwise.

If the newly innovated matter is in the area of worship, it falls under one of the following possibilities:

1. It was introduced at the time of the Companions and was practiced by all of them or some of them or they came to know about it but did not opposed to it.
2. It was introduced during the time of the Followers (*tabeen*).
3. It was introduced during the time of the Successors (*taba' al-tabeen*).
4. It was introduced after the time of Successors until our day.

As for the innovation introduced during the era of the Companions, they either rejected it or accepted and approved of it.

As for the newly introduced matters that were rejected by the Companions, they are blameworthy innovations that fall under the statement of the Prophet (pbuh) "every innovation

is misguidance". Here are a few examples:

The First example for this type of blameworthy innovation is the sermon (khutba) before the two Eid prayers. It was done by Marwan bin Al-Hakam and abnegated (*ankara alay-hi*) by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri as is narrated by Bukhari¹⁰ on the authority of Abu Saeed Al-Khudri who said:

"The Prophet (pbuh) used to proceed to the prayer hall on the days of *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Adha*; the first thing to begin with was the prayer and after that he would stand in front of the people and the people would keep sitting in their rows. Then he would preach to them, advise them and give them orders, (i.e. *Khutba*). And after that if he wished to send an army for an expedition, he would do so; or if he wanted to give an order, he would do so, and then depart. The people followed this tradition till I went out with Marwan, the Governor of Medina, for the prayer of *Eid-ul-Adha* or *Eid-ul-Fitr*. When we reached the Musalla, there was a pulpit made by Kathir bin As-Salt. Marwan wanted to get up on that pulpit before the prayer. I got hold of his clothes but he pulled them and ascended the pulpit and delivered the *Khutba* before the prayer. I said to him, "By Allah, you have changed (the Prophet's tradition)." He replied, "O Abu Sa'id! Gone is that which you know." I said, "By Allah! What I know is better than what I do not know." Marwan said, "People do not sit to listen to our *Khutba* after the prayer, so I delivered the *Khutba* before the prayer."

The Second example is raising the hand during the sermon (*khutba*). It was done by Bishr bin Marwan and abnegated

¹⁰ Bukhari (2/374) and Muslim (6/177).

(*ankara alayhi*) by Umara bin Ruwaiba as is narrated by Muslim(2/162), Abu Dawood(1/289) and others:

"Umara b. Ruwaiba said he saw Bishr b. Marwan on the pulpit raising his hands and said: Allah, disfigure these hands! I have seen Allah's Messenger (pbuh) gesture no more than this with his hands, and he pointed with his forefinger."

As for a newly innovated matter that appeared at the time of the Companions, which pleased them, and was not rejected but accpeted, it is not a blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah shari'yya*). If it is sometimes refereed to as innovation (*bid'ah*) in the linguistic sense of the term, it is qualified as praise-worthy innovation (*bid'ah hasana*).

The Third example is the calling of the first adhan for the Friday prayer, instituted by 'Uthman¹¹ (ra) as was narrated by Bukhari, Ibn Maja, Al-Tirmidhy and others on the authority Al-Saaib bin Yazeed who said:

"In the lifetime of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and `Umar, the Adhan for the Jumma prayer used to be pronounced when the Imam sat on the pulpit. But during the Caliphate of `Uthman when the Muslims increased in number, a third Adhan at Az-Zaura' was added. Abu `Abdullah said, "Az-Zaura' is a place in the market of Medina."

Al-Nawawi said: "The reason it was called the third *adhan* is because *iqaama* is also called *adhan*."

11 I know of a community in the United States that eliminated this *adhan* on the grounds that it was bid'ah (God forbid!). As if they never heard the prophetic statement "You must adhere to my sunnah and the sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs [after me]."

The Fourth example is performing Eid prayer at multiple locations in a town. It was introduced by Ali bin Abi Talib (ra) during his Caliphate as was stated by Shaykh Al-Islam in his *Minhaaj Al-Sunna*¹². The sunna practice, during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman, is that only a single Friday prayer is performed in a town nor would there be more than one *Eid* prayer in a town for either of the *Eids*. During the reign of Ali (ra), he was told: "There ate the weak and the feeble who are not able to come to the central Mosque." He designated an imam to pray with those people in a Mosque.

The Fifth example is calling the *adhan* and *iqaama* for the second congregation in a Masjid where the primary congregational prayer had already been performed. If a congregational prayer is performed in a Mosque and then a group of people came and establish another congregational prayer, is it permissible for them to call *adhan* and *iqaama* again? There are three different views:

- First: They call *adhan* and *iqaama*
- Second: They don't call *adhan* but call *iqaama*
- Third: They neither call the *adhan* nor *iqaama* as it is covered in detail in various commentaries of *Al-Kanz*" and *Al-Durr Al-Mukhtaar*.

Some thought that calling *adhan* and *iqaama* for the second congregational prayer is an innovation (bid'ah). This is a fallacy due to what Bukhari mentions in the Chapter of Virtues of Congregational Prayer as a suspended narration (*ta'leeqan*):

"Anas (ra) came to a Mosque¹³ after the congregational prayer had already been performed. He called the *adhan*, *iqama* and performed a congregational prayer."

Al-Qastalaany mentioned in his commentary (2/30) that the above report (*athar*) was narrated by Abu Ya'la with an intact chain (*wasalahu*) and added that it happened during the *Fajr* prayer.

It says in the narration of Al-Bayhaqi that it happened in Masjid of Bani Rifa'a. Al-Bayhaqi says in his narration that Anas (ra) came with twenty of his students.

This report is a poof that repeating the *adhan* and *iqama* for the subsequent congregational prayers is not a blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah*). Refer to our commentary¹⁴ on *Sharh Al-Wiqaaya* called *Al-Si'aaya Fi Kashfi Ma Fi Sharh Al-Wiqaaya* for a detailed analysis of this subject.

The Sixth example is the delivering of a speech right before the Friday prayer which is referred to as *wa'dz* in many Islamic countries. Taqiyyuddeen Ahmad bin Ali Al-Maqrizi Al-Misri said in his book called *Al-Mawaaizd Wa Al-I'tibaar Bi Dhikr Al-Khutat Wa Al-Aathaar*.

"Omar bin Shabba says that Al-Hasan [Al-Basri] was asked:

"When was the introduction of story-telling (qasas) in

13 In the city of Basra.

14 Al-Imama Al-Laknawi unfortunately passed away before completing *Al-Si'aaya Fi Kashfi Ma Fi Sharh Al-Wiqaayah*. He passed away before reaching 40 yet he left behind a tremendous treasure consisting of about 150 books or booklets. May Allah have mercy on him and on all the scholars of Islam.

the Mosques introduced? "

He said:

"During the Caliphate of Othmaan."

He was asked:

"Who was the first to do story telling in the Masjids?"

He said:

"[It was] Tameem Al-Daari."

Al-Maqrizi mentions a narration from Ibn Shehaab who said: "The first person to do story telling in the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) is Tameem Al-Daari. He asked permission of Omar (ra) to tell stories but the Caliph did not permit it until the very end of his reign. Omar (ra) granted Tameem Al-Daari the permission to deliver speeches on Fridays before he himself arrived to deliver the Friday sermon. After the passing of Omar (ra), Tameem Al-Daari asked Othman's permission to continue his speeches before the Friday sermon (*kbutba*) and he was given the permission."

The Seventh Example is the gathering of people during the nights of Ramadan to pray twenty rak'ah in congregation - *Taraaweeh* prayer. This was introduced during the time of Omar (ra) and he said: "What a wonderful innovation this is (*ni'matul bid'ah hiya*). He called it bid'ah in the general sense of the term and qualified it as "wonderful" realizing or indicating that not every newly introduced matter is a misguiding one. He did not use the legal (shar'iy) meaning of bid'ah (blameworthy innovation) for how can one describe a blameworthy innovation as wonderful after the Prophet (pbuh) said that every blameworthy innovation is misguidance. This topic is dealt with in great detail in our book-

let called "Tuhfat Al-Akhyar Fi Ihyai Sunnati Sayyid Al-Abraar".

The Eighth Example¹⁵ is reciting the *takbeer* for the *qunoot* of the witr prayer. In summary¹⁶, raising the hands and saying the *takbeer* for the *qunoot* of the witr prayer is not narrated with an authentic chain from the Prophet (pbuh). However, it has been reported that some of the Companions and the Followers did practice it as was stated by Al-Ayni, Ibn Qudaama, Al-Halabi, Al-Itqaani and others. How can this practice then be a blame worthy innovation (*bid'ah sayyiah*)? ...The long and the short of it is that he who practices it with the intention of following the Companions and the Followers will be rewarded and he who leaves it will not be rebuked or punished. Allah knows best and with Him is the highest reward.

Reactions of the Companions to Newly Introduced Practices

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, judged some of the newly introduced practices as bid'ah.

- If they declare a practice as bid'ah with an accompanying disapproval, it means it is a blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah qabeeha*) for them.
- If they declare a practice bid'ah without any accompanying disapproval, it means they are using the term bid'ah in its general sense (and not the legal sense) of innovation and that the said practice for them is a praiseworthy

¹⁵ Al-Imama Al-Laknawi discusses at length the internal arguments of the Hanafi School regarding this subject page 33 until 41. I skipped this section as it is not directly related to the topic at hand. I will simply present his conclusion on page 41.

¹⁶ Page 41.

innovation (*bid'ah hasana*) not a blameworthy one (*bid'ah dalaala*).

One can present a few examples.

The First Example: Abu Dawood¹⁷ narrates from Mujaahid who said:

"I was with Ibn Omar and a man did *al-tathweeb*¹⁸ for *Dzohr* or *Asr* prayer. Ibn Omar said: Let us leave for this is innovation(*bid'ah*). It says in *Al-Binaaya Sharh Al-Hidaaya* of Al-Imaam Badr Al-Ayni:

"It is narrated from Ali (ra) according to the *Al-Mabsoot* of Imaam Al-Sarakhsi that a *muadhdhin* did *al-tathweeb* for *Isha* prayer and Ali (ra) said:

"Throw this innovator out of the Masjid."

If you said, how come the jurists (*fuqaaha*) considered *al-tathweeb* permissible in the presence of the two above reports [from the Companions]?

I would say that the jurist are divided into three groups with regards to *al-tathweeb*.

The First View: *Al-Tathweeb* is disliked (*yukraho*) in all prayers except for *Fajr* as it is time of sleep and heedlessness. It is recommended for the caller of *adhan* to do *tathweeb*. The evidence for this what is reported by Abu Dawood from Abi Bakra who said:

"I came out with the Prophet (pbuh) to offer the dawn

17 1/148

18 What is meant by *al-tathweeb* is that the man either said between the *adhan* and *iqaama* "*al-sallatu khayrun min al-nawm*" or "*Al-salatu rahimakum Allah*".

prayer. Whenever he passed by a sleeping man he called him for prayer or moved him with his foot."

Ali Al-Qaari said in his *Mirqaat Al-Mafaatih Sharh Mishkaat Al-Masaabih*:

"As far as I am considered, the above narration is an evidence for the permissibility of *al-tathweeb*."

The Second View: Abu Yusuf said *al-tathweeb* is permissible for the rulers and everyone who is preoccupied with the issues of the Muslims. The supporting evidence or the origin of this view is what is narrated through multiple chains that Bilal (ra) used to go to the door of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and call him to the prayer after the *adhan* before the *iqaama*.

The Third View: The scholars among the later generations says that *al-tathweeb* is permissible since among the later generations negligence is observed with regards to the prayer and *al-tathweeb* (an extra reminder) should be helpful. During the early generation (*al-sadr al-awwal*), people were not negligent of their prayers and that is why *al-tathweeb* was not needed. This is the excuse of those who consider *al-tathweeb* permissible after having come across the two narrations against it. There is still more to say on this subject but those who are interested can refer to our booklet called "Al-Tahqeeq Al-Ajeeb Fi Al-Tahtweeb" where we list the arguments both for and against the permissibility of *al-tathweeb*.

Another example is what was narrated by Al-Tirmidhy

(2/43), who declared it fair (*hasan*), Al-Nasaai (2/135), Ibn Maja (1/267), Al-Bayhaqi (2/52) and others on the authority of Abi Na'ama Al-Hanafi (i.e., Qays bin Abaaya) from Ibn Abdillah bin Mughaffal who said:

"While I was praying, I said: *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim*

"In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent." My

father heard me and said: "O my son this is a newly invented matter, beware of the newly-invented." He (Ibn

Abdullah) said: "I have not seen any one of the Companions of Allah's Messenger who hated a newly invented

matter in Islam more than him. And he said: 'I have performed *Salat* with the Prophet, and with Abu Bakr,

and Umar, and with Uthman. I did not hear any one of them saying it. So do not say it. When you are performing

Salat say: Al-Hamdu lilahi Rabbil-Alamin "All praise is due to Allah the Lord of all that exists."

This narration indicates that uttering *basmala* out loud in prayer is an innovation that Abdullah bin Mughaffal considered it blameworthy (*istaqbahahu*). It is a subject of disagreement among the scholars and the narrations also differ. The truth is that it has been reported from the prophet (pbuh) authentically that he would utter *basmala* loudly from time to time but saying it quietly is a stronger view as I treated the subject in depth in my booklet called "Ihkaam Al-Qan-tara Fi Ahkaam Al-Basmala".

Second Example¹⁹: This has to do with Omar (ra) calling the *taraweeh* a praiseworthy innovation (*bid'ah hasana*). Saeed

19 This is an example for when the Companions declare a practice *bid'ah* without any accompanying disapproval, it means they are using the term *bid'ah* in its general sense of innovation and that the

bin Mansoor narrates in his Sunan on the authority of Abu Umaama Al-Baahili (ra) saying:

"Allah ordained that you fast during the month of Ramadan but did not ordain the prayer at night (i.e., *taraweeh*). The *taraweeh* prayer is something that you introduced therefore continue performing it and do not abandon it. Some of the people of children of Israel introduced an innovation and then left it and Allah (sw) rebuked them when he said: "...As for monkery, they innovated it --We did not prescribe it to them-- only to seek Allah's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance...[Qur'an 57/27]"

This fact that this narration orders people to continue observing *taraweeh* while describing it as bid'ah means that it is a praiseworthy innovation.

Another example is what was narrated by Ibn Aby Shayba with an authentic chain (*bi isnaadin saheeh*) from Al-Haakim bin Al-A'araj who said:

"I asked Ibn Omar about the prayer of *Duhaa* and he said: 'It is an innovation. What a wonderful innovation it is.'"

Abdurrazzaaq narrates with an authentic chain (*bi isnaadin shaeeh*) from Saalim from his father who said:

"Othman (ra) was killed and there was no one else that performed it. And there is nothing more beloved to me than it among what people innovated."

said practice for them is a praiseworthy innovation (*bid'ah hasana*) not a blameworthy one (*bid'ah dalaala*).

Al-Qastalaaniy said in his *Al-Mawaahib Al-Laduniyya*:

"What he means [by calling the *Duhaa* prayer innovation] is that the Messenger (pbuh) did not practice it continuously or that praying openly in the Masjids or the like is bid'ah. In summary, there is nothing in the narrations from Ibn Omar that renders the prayer of *Duha* illegal (*ghayr mashroo'*) this is because his denial may mean he did not see [the Prophet (pbuh) perform] it personally not that the Prophet (pbuh) was never seen performing it. It could also mean that he was calling a specific way of performing it bid'ah."

Proofs For What was Introduced by the Companions is not a Blameworthy Innovation (bid'ah dalalah)

The fact that there are many hadith indicating the permissibility of following the way of the Companions is proof that what was introduced by them are not blameworthy innovations.

Proof One

Like the hadith:

"My Companions are like the stars. Whichever of them you follow, you will be guided."

It is reported by Al-Daraqutni in his *Al-Mu'talif* and *Gharaaibu Maalik*. It is also reported by Al-Qudaiy in his *Musnad Al-Shihaab*", Abd bin Humaydi and Al-Bayhaqi in "*Al-Madkhal*", Ibn Adiy in *Al-Kaamil*, Al-Daarimi, Ibn Abdulbar²⁰, Ibn Asaakir and Al-Haakim with different wordings that are close in meaning with various chains of narrations all of which are weak as was explained in detail by the Hadith Master Ibn Hajar

20 Jami' bayan al-ilmi wa fadlihi (2/90-91)

in his *Al-Kaafi Al-SHaafi Fi Takhreej Ahaadith Al-Kashshaaf*²¹ however due to its multiple chains it raises to the level of fair (hasan) and for this reason it was declared fair (*hasn*) by Al-Saghaani as was mentioned by Al-Sayyid Al-Jurjaani in his commentary of *Al-Mishkaah* where he says under the hadith "The precedence of a scholar over a worshiper...":

"They were likened to stars in the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "My companions are like stars..." This hadith was declared fair (*hassanahu*) by Al-Imaam Al-Saghaani."

Qaasim [bin Qutlubogha] AL-Hanafi says in his *Sharh Mukhtasar Al-Manaar*:

"Following a companion, which means taking his words or imitating his actions without looking for supporting proof, is obligatory and overrides legal analogy (*qiyaas*) due to the saying of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

"The similitude of my Companions in my nation is like that of the stars. Whichever one you follow, you will be guided."

This hadith is narrated by Al-Daraqutni, Abdulbarr on the authority of Ibn Omar and it is also narrated with a similar meaning from Anas. None of the chains is free of blemish but the different chains support each other."

Proof Two

Like the hadith:

- "You must adhere to my sunnah and the sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs [after me].²²"

Proof Three

21 4/94

22 This is part of the hadith of Al-Irbaad bin Saariya al-Sulamy that is narrated by Ahmad (4/126&127, Abu Dawood (4/201), Al-Tirmidhy (10/143) who said "It is a fair authentic hadith (*hadeethun hasanun*)

Like the hadith:

"Follow after me Abu Bakr (ra) and Omar (ra)²³"

This hadith is reported by Al-Tirmidhy, Ahmad and others.

Proof Four

Like the report (*athar*) of Ibn Masood:

"Allah (sw) looked at the hearts of His slaves and chose Muhammed (pbuh) and sent him as His Messenger. Then He looked at the hearts of His slaves again chose his Companions as the helpers of His religion and ministers of His Prophet. Whatever Muslims consider good it is likewise in the sight of Allah and whatever Muslims consider bad it is likewise in the sight of Allah."

This hadith is narrated by Al-Tabaraani and Ahmad in his *Musnad*²⁴ and others²⁵.

I mentioned these ahadith and more with arguments both for and against in *Tuhfat Al-Akhyar*²⁶ and so I won't repeat them here.

Should one adapt the practice of a Companion or go back to what was done at the time of the Prophet (pbuh)?

If a certain practice is reported from a Companion and this

saheeh), Ibn Maja (1/15) and it is the 28th hadith of Imam Al-Nawawi's 40 Hadith collection.

23 Narrated by Hudhayfa from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Reported by Ahmad (5/382) and Al-Tirmidhy (13/129) who said: "It is a fair hadith (*hadeethun hasan*)."

24 1/379

25 Al-Haythamy in "*Majma' Al-Zawaaid*" (1/177) and Al-Tabaraani in "*Al-Kabeer*." Al-Haythamy said "Its narrators are trustworthy (*thiqaat*)."

26 Pages 164-174.

practice did not exist at the time of the prophet (pbuh), is better to adapt the practice of the Companion or go back to what was practiced at the time of the Prophet (pbuh)?

If a practice is reported [authentically] from a Companion, there are three **possibilities**:

1. There exist a Qur'anic text or a Prophetic statement which indicate the permissibility of his practice.
2. There exists text that goes against his practice.
3. There is no text for or against his practice.

In case of the **first possibility**, there is no doubt that it is preferable to take the practice of the Companion, even though it did not exist during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), there is a sacred text in support of it making the practice fall under Islamic law.

In case of the **second possibility**, if possible at all, one has to combine the practice of the Companion with that of the sacred text so as not to deem the practice of the Companion unislamic. If the reconciliation is not possible between the practice of the Companion and the sacred text, it is not preferable to take the practice of the Companion since there is a text that contradicts it. One has to follow the sacred text and the Companion is excused because of the possibility that he may have never come across the particular text since it is unfathomable that a Companion would go against a Qur'anic injunction or a Sunnah practice.

In case of the **third possibility**, where a practice is reported from a Companion that is neither supported or refuted by a sacred text, it is preferable to imitate the Companion due to

the various ahadith we have quoted thus far. We won't hesitate to adapt the practice of the Companion until we come across evidence indication otherwise. Make sure you understand this noble principle for many branches sprout from it.

If the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) have a consensus on a practice, undoubtedly it is preferable to adapt it but what happens if they differ about it?

The person is free to choose from whoever of them he wishes and will be guided as the experts of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence stated in their books.

Innovations of the Followers and Successors

As for an innovation introduced during the time of the Followers (*tabeen*) or Successors (*taba' al-tabeen*), it is to be treated as was described under the title "*Reactions of the Companions to Newly Introduced Practices*". That is to say, if they expressed disapproval for a newly introduced matter during their time, it is to be taken as a blameworthy innovation otherwise it is a praiseworthy innovation.

Innovations Introduced after the Era of the Companions, Followers and Successors

As for an innovation introduced after the Era of the Companions, Followers and Successors, it has a parallel or a analogue from the era of the first three generations or if fits under one of the principles of the Islamic law, it is not a blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah*). Since calling a practice *bid'ah* implies it did not exist during the three blessed generations nor does it fall

under any principle of Islamic law, whenever a practice fulfilling the two previous conditions is termed bid'ah, it has to be qualified with an adjective such as "praiseworthy (*al-hasana*)."

If a practice is introduced after the three blessed generations, and it does not fall under any of the principles of Islamic law, it becomes a blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah dalaalah*) even if it is adapted by some people of virtue or those who are famous people of learning for the habits of the scholars or devout worshipers does not constitute evidence if it is not in sync or agreement with the Islamic law.

Conclusion

How pitiful is the doing of some of the scholars of our time where they are divided into two **groups**.

The First group limits the sunnah to what is found during the first three generations and considers what was introduced thereafter as a blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah dalala*) without looking to see if it falls under one of the principles of Islamic law. Some of them go as far as limiting the sunnah to the time of the Prophet (pbuh) and permit the labeling of what was introduced during the time of the Companions as blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah dalaala*).

The Second group relied on what has come down from their forefathers or what was practiced by their teachers (*mashaayikh*) and included in the category of praiseworthy innovations things that have no root in Islam nor do they fall under any of its principles.

When the first group responded to the second group with the hadith "Every innovation is misguidance...", the second group

resorted to the specialization (*takhsees*) of the hadith saying that it excludes the praiseworthy innovation (*al-bid'ah al-hasana*). We seek refuge with Allah from this controversy and antagonism. They think it is helpful. By Allah it is not helpful rather it is harmful. Had I not feared of making the book too long and the boredom of the reader, I would have demonstrated the mistakes in including many practices among the praiseworthy innovations when they are blameworthy or in declaring many practices among the blameworthy innovations when they are praiseworthy. One has to avoid either extreme and follow the middle path.

About The Booklet

The concept of bid'ah has become a means by which the Muslim nation has become divided. There are some who call anything, which did not exist during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), bid'ah and label those who adopt some of those practices as people of innovation (bid'ah) or misguidance (dalaalah).

The question that must be asked is: "How have the Muslims been dealing with newly introduced matters starting from the time of the Companions until recent times?" In order to provide an encompassing answer to this question, I gathered the views of the four schools of thought in this booklet (Hanbali, Shafii, Maliki and Hanafi madhhabs). From each Madhab, I include statements of some of the famous scholars regarding the meaning and classification of bid'ah (innovation).

I include the magnificent research of one of the greatest scholars of 19th century: Al-Imaam Abu Al-Hasaanat Muhammed Abdulhayy Al-Laknawi Al-Hindi. In his research he demonstrated how the first three blessed generations responded to the newly innovated matters which cropped up during their time. He concludes his research by providing advice on how we should deal with bid'ah in our own time. I believe his advice contains therein a cure for the disease of corrupting the term bid'ah, perhaps inadvertently, to divide the Muslim community.

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